RAIN-MAKING

Little information is available on the processes of rain-making among the Luo. Roscoe states that it is an important ceremony and is performed by a *musoga* priests who lives among the people for this purpose.(1) According to Northcote, the rain-maker is greatly esteemed, and his homestead is usually found near a big tree which is considered sacred. When rain is wanted, he gathers some herbs, puts them in a large pot of water and boils them under the tree. He draws off a little into another pot and, sucking it up through a reed, squirts it into the air, after first blowing through the reed and making the pot bubble.(2) Evans-Pritchard mentions that the Luo rain-maker is called the *won koth* and that sometimes his functions are combined with those of the *jabilo*. Rain-makers among the neighbouring Bantu seem to have a higher reputation than Luo *jakoth* and are often consulted.

WITCHCRAFT

Sickness is thought to be due either to the malevolence of a ghost or, more frequently, to magic worked by some envious person who wishes to bring misfortune on his victim.(3) In either case the aid of a witchdoctor is sought and he, by means of various incantations, discovers the cause and the culprit. A sorcerer may cause death by spearing the shadow of his victim, by working spells, by hiding certain objects near the house which bring sickness to the inmates. If a ghost is causing trouble the witchdoctor prescribes offerings and sacrifices necessary for appeasement. He also discovers thieves, conducts ordeals and divines the causes of events. He makes counter-magic to defend people against the activities of sorcerers and is the general prescriber of all cures. Johnston mentions a 'deeper magic' *(jamkingo)* which, among the Gesi tribe is practised by the blacksmiths.(4)

LIFE CYCLE

BIRTH

After the birth of a boy the mother stays inside the house for four days; for a girl, she stays inside for three days. The father of the child does not eat or sleep in the hut until the child begins to cut its teeth.

Twins are considered lucky; their arrival is attended by many ceremonies and by propitiatory dances.

PUBERTY

Until marriage, girls help their mothers in the fields and assist them in cooking and carrying. Boys help in herding the animals. At puberty both boys and girls have their front lower teeth extracted and for four days they remain in their homes. After this period they go about visiting

(1) Roscoe, *The Northern Bantu*, 1915, p.292.
(2) Northcote, *J.R.A.I.*, 1907, p.64. (3) *Ibid.*
(4) *The Uganda Protectorate*, Vol.II, 1902.

881 304 friends and receiving presents of fowls. Girls, in addition, have their bodies scarified on the sides and back. From this time on until marriage the boys live in the bachelors' hut and the girls in the unmarried women's quarters. There is no mention by any of the authorities of an age-set system.

DEATH

764 The dead are buried close to their homes, a man on his right side with the hand under the head and a woman on her left side, also with the hand under the head.(1)

765 Friends and relatives gather shortly after death and, if the deceased was a man of importance, the whole of his clan is represented. Every man brings his companion bull and rides it. All dress up as if for war and the *buru* party takes place. If the dead man was not very important the mourning is limited to shaving the head and painting the body with white clay. Offerings are put on the grave of the deceased.

10: Roscoe M-5 (ca. 1900)1915
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shave their heads, taking care to keep separate the hair which is cut off. This hair is hidden away in some place near, by preference in a rat-hole or in some hole where it is not likely to be found again. 846

Birth of twins. At the birth of twins the parents remain together in one house for ten days, and the midwife waits on them. When this time of seclusion ends, a small pot of blood is drawn from the neck of an ox, cooked and given to the parents to eat. After the meal they are escorted to the river, washed, and their heads shaved. Their house is then swept and the floor smeared with cow-dung, and friends come and dance in the village and drink beer. The mother takes the twins a round of visits which lasts several days, but she returns home each night to sleep. At each house she visits the people give her presents of grain. When the visits have been made the mother brews beer with the grain she has received in presents, and her friends again gather to dance and to drink the beer. 845 [431]

Initiation ceremonies. Children live in the same village with their parents and under their control. Until marriage they lead a free and happy life, with few wants and cares. The boys assist in herding cattle, and the girls help their mothers in their fields and also carry wood and water and assist in cooking. Their duties are light and there is no force beyond argument used to make them work. Children imitate their elders in seeking ornaments to wear and in smearing their bodies with oil and red or white paint. When they come to the age of puberty, their four front teeth in the lower jaw are extracted and they are initiated in the customs of the clan. For four days they remain in the house, after which they go about visiting their friends and receive presents of fowls. Girls go through the same ceremony as boys in having their teeth extracted, but, in addition, their bodies are scarified on the sides and back. Should there be excessive haemorrhage when teeth are extracted, the parents send to the man who has the bracelets of the deceased person after whom the boy is named and borrow them, and the youth wears them until the bleeding ceases. When the ceremony of extracting the teeth is over, the boys are sent to live in the boys' quarters 857 [302] 881 304 [431] [752] 882

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883 On the whole, girls dislike those men whose chief object
864 is sexual satisfaction. Their caution is often the result of
881 talks on the nature of sexual relationship which girls hold in their communal sleeping places, and with older women.

When newly-married women return to their maternal homes, they freely discuss among themselves—especially during sleeping hours—their experiences with their husbands. This affords an opportunity for the unmarried adolescent girl to obtain first-hand information on the nature of relationships in married life.

883 *Opportunities for contact.* The normal first meeting between girls and those with whom they may have sexual relations, takes place by conscious or deliberate arrangements made by the parties concerned, at marriage ceremonies or in public places like market centres or towns. They first make each other's acquaintance somewhere between the girl's and the man's house, particularly when the two live in close proximity. These are distinguished from any other meetings in that they are arranged between the male friends and the older adolescent girls or those on the threshold of adolescence.

The meetings which take place during marriage ceremonies are observed with great interest by girls of the nursing age, who watch the older girls' behaviour towards their men friends with keen curiosity. In many instances introductions are managed through the
584 brothers of the girls. Introductions resulting in marriage
883 may also come about through a girl first acquainting herself with sisters who introduce their brother to her. Brothers of adolescent girls would, like all members of the family, disapprove of a prolonged friendship without any sign of betrothal and would do all they could to persuade the girl to look for another friend.

881 *Sex education of adolescent girls.* Girls in the old tradi-
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tional society had a more deliberate or conscious sex education than they receive in modern times. Instruction on the nature of sexual relationship was formerly given by an old woman of the village, whose hut served as a communal sleeping place for the girls. This old woman was one who must have stopped giving birth to children. She was either a grandmother or an elder wife in a polygamous homestead. The communal sleeping places are still a feature of the girls' environment, but many of the modern huts have no experienced woman in them; hence the girls have lost their former source of instruction on both the marital and the following day-to-day relationships.

The change from the traditional type of sex education has forced girls approaching marriage to seek information elsewhere. At present they usually make enquiries of experienced married women living in their neighbourhood. Beyond a few cautious warnings, mothers are rarely known to take part in the sex education of their daughters while fathers are completely detached from this field of enquiry.

Sex activities in the communal sleeping places. Talks on sex are not the only activities engaged in by adolescent girls in their sleeping places. In some areas they also receive nocturnal visits from young men who have failed to find suitable opportunities to meet them during the day. This is not a widely spread practice, however, which may be due partly to the strict morality imposed by Christian moral conventions.

Sometimes the girls themselves make arrangements to welcome these visitors by night, remaining awake in order to open the door for the men with whom they have made the appointment. Sometimes this form of visit is also carried out by young men without the girls' consent, but if they are discovered, a great outcry is

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raised against such raiders. It is considered a disgrace to be discovered as an accomplice in raids on the girls' sleeping quarters.

On attaining Maturity

The attainment of maturity among girls is marked by the first onset of menstruation. In the past this was kept very secret until several periods had been experienced, and even now its first occurrence is kept secret. Formerly, early preparations were made for it by instructing the girls about the physical changes involved.

The information regarding this important physiological happening used to be given by the old woman in whose hut the girls slept. At present the information is obtained largely from experienced women with whom the girls associate. In the past there was no initiation ceremony to celebrate the event, and today the position remains the same. Although the betrothal of a girl could take place as early as ten, the social attitude was and still is that girls should not be handed over to their husbands before attaining maturity. Even when the mutual handing over took place before this age, the girl was obliged to live in the home of some older woman until the advent of menstruation. It is still believed that premature marriage results in great weakness to the girl.

The social position of a girl on reaching maturity. The social position of the newly-mature girl is vague and uncertain. Any abnormality of mind, character or body, is a source of anxiety to her family. Moreover, as most girls marry between sixteen and eighteen, there is a tendency for ill-wishers to over-state the ages of girls above that limit, because the attitude of society towards them is similar to that adopted towards overdue goods. Those who fail to marry at an early age thus become subjects of scorn. So strong is the pressure exerted by

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group of girls or young women meet, there is comment on what has been said about so-and-so in certain quarters. Mixed with this unwelcome gossip may come other features of great encouragement. Thus there is much emotional strain in the years preceding marriage. It is a time when both parties to the engagement are uncertain about what may develop next.

Amidst all this, the woman still has the freedom of talking to any young men she meets, and the emotional uncertainty, which is much stronger with a girl, compels her at times not to put all her hopes in one man. Although her relationship with former friends becomes relatively weak, she does not lose interest in them until she eventually gets married. A great deal of persuasion is employed. Each time she meets her friends her sympathies are tested. In this difficult period the male and female relatives of the man should play a beneficial part. Some carefully arranged marriages are broken owing to lack of such support.

In general, a betrothed woman is an object of competition. Once engaged, the forces that work against her engagement are let loose. Reports true and false are continually passed on. In the girl's family, the mother continues to instruct her on how to address the relatives whom she will meet in her new home. If the marriage is to be cancelled, the dowry paid by the first candidate must be paid back before the cattle of the other are accepted. Should the girl run away with someone else, she will, on her return, be beaten, and it is only after a long interval that the offence will be forgotten.

Pre-nuptial and modern education. There is no special attempt to educate mature girls just before marriage. The nature of the training they receive is merely a continuation of that given to them in their adolescence. Thus they obtain information about their future status

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584 on their own initiative, the object being to familiarise
881 them with the relationship between husband and wife and with the prospective husband's moods and to establish a good understanding. At this time there is no instruction on the care of babies, such knowledge being acquired after the woman has given birth.

871 The difference between the traditional training of
178 brides and their modern education, even in its elemen-
[881] tary stages, is tremendous. While traditional education is constantly weakening, modern education tends to develop along its own independent lines, omitting rather than assisting those elements it is intended to improve. It is likely that a stronger foundation could be built through modern education if the latter paid more heed to those features of community life which most urgently require improvement, but which in themselves provide a groundwork of practical knowledge.

The pace of progress in Luo society is bound to be slow while the sphere of women's life remains still radically conservative. It is arguable that modern education emphasizes literary theory too much, yet the traditional education which stresses practical work from early childhood, gives only a limited time for theory, even in maturity. However this may be, there is no doubt that
[881] there now exists too much ignorance of the requisite knowledge about sex, for girls and young women can be met who plainly profess ignorance on certain fundamental features of the traditional training.

It therefore seems necessary that if education is to be of real use and interest to girls, some features of practical value to society should be included. This presupposes a thorough study of the subject concerned and a wise selection of those elements which would inspire the pupils to improve themselves and the society in which they move.